



Traffic ticket? Pay it online

Of The Oakland Press

If there's any silver lining to getting a traffic ticket in Oakland County, it's that paying it has become a whole lot easier.

Local road rule violators who chalked up 19,545 tickets in the last three years have paid more than \$2 million in fines via the county's Web site - www.oakgov.com.

And these figures include only those drivers who were ticketed within the jurisdiction of the 52nd District Court. Its four divisions represent a little more than half of Oakland County's 61 communities.

"When we started looking at this program, we asked, 'Why would anyone want to pay their taxes or their tickets online?'" said Phil Bertolini, deputy executive and chief information officer for Oakland County.

"What we've found out is that it's the convenience. This program has definitely proven itself."

All but one local district court - the 45A District Court in Berkley - offers an online payment option for traffic tickets.

The 52nd District Court, however, is the only court that uses the county's online payment system rather than that of the forprofit, Indianapolis-based Government Payment Service Inc.

Like that service, Oakland County charges a processing fee for each transaction. Since December 2003, system administrators have used \$102,000 in revenue to maintain and enhance a variety of online services offered on the county Web site.

Jennifer Phillips, chief administrator for the 51st District Court in Waterford Township, said her court does not share in revenues generated by GPS processing fees.

She said she and other court officials have considered joining either the county's program or a similar system now being piloted by state government.

"We'd consider going with the county, because that's a good system. But because our case management system is handled through the state, it would be easier for us to go with the state's program," Phillips said.

Mark Dobek, director of state-run Judicial Information Systems, said offering online payment options involves a great deal of technical engineering because each court maintains an independent information network.

"Because of the nature of these transactions ... we have to be 100 percent sure that where this information is going is secure," he explained.

The state will continue monitoring the performance of a pilot program in Detroit district courts before considering further expansion.

Phillips predicted that one way or another, all district courts will eventually implement an online ticket payment program tied directly to their case management systems.

"We're just waiting for the right technology at the right price," she said.